

Sustainability–Educating for the Future

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It is important that we make science and technology relevant to the needs of society. Increasingly we see the need to improve our stewardship of the world we live in. Our responsibility is not just to ourselves but to our children, not just for those near us but for those farther away who are affected by our activities. We need to create sustainable systems. Achieving this requires learning what the right science is and what the right ways are to apply it. We must learn and teach at every level. A sustainable society has to be a learning society. We are not alone in believing this. The UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development begins in 2005. To build a sustainable society we need to understand our interdependence with countries around the globe. We will be in the best position to support international efforts when we develop the capabilities necessary to transform ourselves into a sustainable society.

Our educational efforts have to be pervasive. We need to provide **graduate and professional education** for the people who will manage private enterprises and public institutions; who will design and construct industrial processes, buildings, communities, and infrastructure; who will do research and development to support these efforts, and who will become teachers at all levels. We need to provide **undergraduate education** in universities and community colleges that strengthens the preparation and increases the likelihood of undergraduates pursuing careers in these professions. We need to greatly expand the pool of **elementary and secondary school** students who have the science, math, and understanding to invest themselves in these areas of study. We also need to educate the **public** so they will incorporate sustainable practices in their own lives and encourage their children to pursue careers directed toward increasing sustainability.

There are many organizations that understand these needs and have started to take action to meet them. Some outstanding examples will be described in this session. Each speaker will address current activities and needs for sustainability education at all levels in his area. At the end of the session, there will be a discussion of next steps for supporting these efforts and to help the US prepare for the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

Chair: Alan Hecht, Director for Sustainable Development, EPA Office of Research and Development

EPA's Education for Sustainability Initiatives: Alan Hecht, Director for Sustainable Development, EPA Office of Research and Development

Principles and Practice of Sustainability Education in Schools: Jaimie P. Cloud, Founder and President, The Sustainability Education Center, New York City

National Efforts in Sustainability Education: Alan Elzerman, Director, School of the Environment, Clemson University; charter member of the Council of Environmental Deans and Directors

Building Partnerships for Sustainable Science Education: Sally Shuler, Executive Director, National Science Resources Center, National Academies of Science and Smithsonian Institution

Discussion and Summation